



El Dorado County Farm Bureau

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AUG 18 2000

CALFED Bay-Delta Program

August 16, 2000

Cal-Fed Bay-Delta Program
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

Attention: Mr. Steve Ritchie, Acting Executive Director

Subject: Final Programmatic EIS/EIR

Dear Mr. Ritchie,

We hereby request a 180 day extension to the public review and comment period for the subject document. Although the EIS was officially released on July 21, 2000, many people are just now receiving their copies. We were alarmed to read that written comments were due in 30 days and that public hearings are not contemplated.

As you are no doubt aware, the federal government has inundated the public with significant plan documents requiring review and comment during the same period. The U.S.F.S. Roadless Initiative comment period ended on July 17. The U.S.F.&W.S. Draft Recovery Plan for the Red Legged Frog review period ends on August 10. The U.S.F.S. Sierra Nevada Framework comments are due on August 11. And your 6,500 page Cal-Fed document requires input by August 21. All of these proposals individually are formidable to wade through in a comprehensive way, and all of these programs have potential major impact to this county.

The El Dorado County Farm Bureau represents over 1,500 members. The Cal-Fed plan will have a significant impact on watershed management. El Dorado County boasts several major watersheds, water projects, and public utilities that will be impacted. In addition, we have agricultural, private, and public lands that may be impacted by management guidelines contained in the EIS. We believe that if we are to be impacted by new requirements, we should also be part of the process of developing them. As a minimum, we should at least be advised of what the changes are and how they will affect us. In order to be part of the collaborative process we need more time to adequately review this plan and to provide substantive comments to Cal-Fed for consideration.

*Protecting the productive, economic and social viability of El Dorado County
agriculture and farmers*

When the Cal-Fed organization was formed it was intended to provide a unique entity which allowed open collaboration on water issues affecting all stakeholders. Our local Farm Bureau has participated in hearings and in providing comments whenever opportunity existed to do so. However, expecting the members of the public to receive, review, and respond to a 6,500 page document in 30 days without any prior hearings, workshops, or briefings is unconscionable. This action tells the public that Cal-Fed no longer wants a collaborative approach to solve the problems we must all live with in the future management of California's water issues. If this is not the message Cal-Fed intended to send the public, then that must be rectified immediately.

Since all of these issues may have a significant socioeconomic impact to the citizens of this county, it is incumbent on us to request not only an extension to the comment period but for public hearings which allow for open discussions of this plan. We look forward to receiving notice as to the revised review period and when public hearings will be scheduled in or near El Dorado County to address concerns about the EIS.

Sincerely,



Valerie Zentner
Executive Director

vz/hs

Copy: Governor Gray Davis, State of California
Senator Tim Leslie, California State Senate
Assemblyman Rico Oller, California State Assembly
Congressman John Doolittle, U.S. House of Representatives
Senator Dianne Feinstein, U. S. Senate
Senator Barbara Boxer, U.S. Senate
Secretary William J. Lyons, California Dept. of Food and Agriculture
Secretary Dan Glickman, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture
Supervisor Ray Nutting, El Dorado County Board of Supervisors
California Farm Bureau Federation, Mary-Ann Warmerdam
Commissioner Tom Mahach, El Dorado County Planning Commission
Bill Snodgrass, Agricultural Commissioner